

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated November 11, 2003, claims 21-25 and 28 were withdrawn from consideration, claims 32, 33 and 36 were allowed and claims 63-66 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by both Elliott and Lazarus. Further, claims 63 and 66 were rejected under 102(b) as being anticipated by Hartenbach. In this reply, claims 63 and 66 have been amended.

As amended, claim 63 calls for a ring comprising a bundle of concentric, radially overlapping windings formed of a strand of resilient wire, the ring located adjacent one of the free ends (of a tubular graft) and the windings coaxial with the tubular graft.

Elliott fails to disclose windings that are concentric, radially overlapping and coaxial with a tubular graft. For example, Elliott's loops are the same diameter and they are aligned or stacked one atop the other. Column 3, ll. 1-2. Hence, Elliott's loops do not radially overlap. Additionally, as correctly stated in the Office Action, Elliott's loops 26 are not coaxial with the graft. Thus, for at least these reasons, Elliott does not anticipate claim 63.

With respect to Lazarus, springs 136 are a helical coil. Column 8, ll. 51-52. It is respectfully submitted that the coils of springs 136 are not radially overlapping or coaxial with a tubular graft. See Figure 11. Thus, like Elliott, Lazarus does not anticipate amended claim 63.

With respect to Hartenbach, the turns of the flexible hose 8 were described in the Office Action as being longitudinally adjacent. Paper No. 33, at p.3. It is respectfully submitted that the longitudinally adjacent turns of Hartenbach's hose are not radially overlapping. Thus, Hartenbach does not anticipate amended claim 63.

Claim 65 was rejected as being anticipated by Elliott and Lazarus. As explained in the Reply to Paper No. 31, neither Elliott nor Lazarus is believed to inherently disclose a minimum bending diameter of a ring that is less than a solid ring of the same dimensions. Thus, for at least the reasons previously expressed, which are incorporated and reasserted herein, claim 65 is believed to be patentable over the cited references.

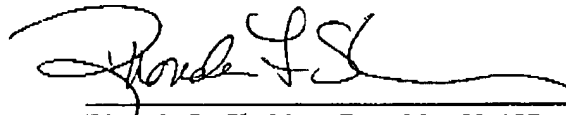
Claim 66 was rejected as being anticipated by each of Elliott, Lazarus and Hartenbach. Generally, claims 63 and 66 were rejected for essentially the same reasons. Thus, for at least the reasons explained above with respect to claim 63, neither Elliott, Lazarus nor Hartenbach is believed to anticipate claim 66.

CONCLUSION

For at least the reasons expressed herein, claims 63-66 are believed to be patentable over the cited references. Further, the amendments to claims 63 and 66 are believed to place the application in condition for allowance or in better form for appeal. Thus, although after final rejection, the Examiner is kindly requested to enter the amendments to claims 63 and 66.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 20-1504 (VAS.0002US).

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: January 7, 2004